

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Status of Claims

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 8-12, 14-18, 20, 21, 23, 25-29, 38, 40, and 43-81 are pending in the application, with claims 8, 14, 20, 38, 43, and 63 being the independent claims. Claims 8, 14, 20, 23, 25, and 38 are sought to be amended. Claims 22, 24, 30-37, 39, 41, and 42 are sought to be canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Claims 1-7, 13, and 19 were previously cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 43-81.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 8-12, 14-18, and 25-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,488,729 to Vigesna *et al.* (“Vigesna”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,481,734 to Yoshida (“Yoshida”). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Independent claim 8 has been amended to recite the features included in former claim 24. The Examiner indicated that claim 24 would be allowable over the references of record, including Vigesna and Yoshida, if rewritten in independent form. (Office

Action at 4.) Accordingly, independent claim 8 as currently amended is allowable. Dependent claims 9-12 and 25-26 are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons independent claim 8 from which they depend, and further in view of their own respective features. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 8-12 and 25-26 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Independent claim 14 has been amended to recite features included in former claim 22. The Examiner indicated that claim 22 would be allowable over the references of record, including Vigesna and Yoshida, if rewritten in independent form. (*Id.*) Accordingly, independent claim 14 as currently amended is allowable. Dependent claims 15-18 and 27-29 are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 14 from which they depend, and further in view of their own respective features. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 14-18 and 27-29 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 30-37 and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,942,525 to Shintani *et al.* (“Shintani”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,594,655 to Halo (“Halo”). Claims 30-37 and 41 have been canceled, thereby rendering the rejection of these claims moot.

Claims 38 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shintani and Halo in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,237,666 to Suzuki *et al.* (“Suzuki”). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Independent claim 38 has been amended to include the features of former claim 39. The Examiner indicated that claim 39 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. (Office Action at 4.) Accordingly, independent claim 38 as currently amended is

allowable. Dependent claim 40 is likewise allowable for at least the same reason as independent claim 38 from which it depends, and further in view of its own features. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 38 and 40 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claim Objections

Claims 20-24 and 39 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim. Claims 22, 24, and 39 have been canceled, thereby rendering the objection to these claims moot. With respect to claims 20, 21, and 23, Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 20 has been rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, independent claim 20 is allowable. Dependent claim 21 is likewise allowable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 20 from which it depends, and further in view of its own features. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claims 20 and 21 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

As set forth above, independent claim 14 has been amended to include the features of claim 22, and is therefore patentable over the references of record. Dependent claim 23 is likewise patentable over the references of record for at least the same reasons as independent claim 14 from which it depends, and further in view of its own features. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claim 23 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the

Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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